



CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PUBLIC HEARING ADDRESSES WATER ISSUES

SACRAMENTO -- The CALFED Bay-Delta Program will hold a public hearing in Stockton, Wednesday, May 27, at the University of California Cooperative Extension, 420 S. Wilson Way. There will be an informal question and answer period from 6 to 7 p.m. The formal hearing will begin at 7 p.m. Delta area residents are encouraged to come and provide input on three potential solutions to environmental and water management problems associated with the Bay-Delta system.

"People living and working in the Delta region will be affected by the decisions being made over the coming months," said Lester Snow, executive director of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. "It is important they participate in the process."

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort among state and federal agencies and California's environmental, urban and agricultural communities. It was initiated in 1995 by Governor Pete Wilson and the Clinton Administration to address environmental and water management problems associated with the Bay-Delta system, an intricate web of waterways created at the junction of the San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and the watershed that feeds them.

For the past several decades, the Bay-Delta system has struggled to meet the competing demands of the environment and water users, while maintaining good water quality and a levee system that protects local towns and infrastructure from flooding and contaminating the state's water supply. Today the system is not adequately meeting any of these needs.

CALFED Agencies

California

The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

On March 16, the CALFED Bay-Delta Program released a draft programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) identifying three potential solutions. All three alternatives were evaluated by technical staff and public working committees against such criteria as benefits to water quality, impact on fish and wildlife, total cost and operational flexibility. Seventeen public hearings are being held throughout the state to provide multiple opportunities for Californians to weigh in on the trade-offs associated with developing a comprehensive solution to the problems of the Bay-Delta system.

The Bay-Delta is a critically important part of California's natural environment and economy, supplying drinking water for more than 22 million Californians, and irrigation water for more than four million acres of the world's most productive farmland. It also supports 750 fish and wildlife species; some found nowhere else on the planet.

Each of the three alternatives for a Bay-Delta solution contain major programs to address water use efficiency, ecosystem restoration, watershed management, levee system integrity, water transfers and water quality. The alternatives differ primarily in how they would move and store water in the system. Alternative 1, the Existing System Conveyance Alternative, would consider storage and make small improvements to the channel configurations of the Delta. Alternative 2, the Modified Through Delta Conveyance Alternative, includes additional storage and would make significant improvements to the channels in the Delta. Alternative 3, the Dual Delta Conveyance Alternative, is similar to Alternative 2, except it also adds a new channel around the east side of the Delta. The solutions range in cost from \$9 to \$10.5 billion over a period of 25 to 30 years.

Public input is critical to the development of an equitable and feasible solution. In addition to giving oral comments at a public hearing, interested individuals may send written comments to the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, 1416 9th St., Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814. The public comment period ends June 1, 1998. An executive summary of the draft programmatic EIS/EIR and the Phase II Interim Report, which contains information on key issues to be resolved prior to the selection of a preferred alternative, are available on the CALFED website, <http://calfed.ca.gov>. These documents are also available, along with the complete EIS/EIR and its appendices, at libraries throughout California and by calling 1-800-900-3587.

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If you need reasonable accommodation due to disability, please contact Pauline Nevins, CALFED Bay-Delta Program, (916) 657-2666, or (TDD) 1-800-735-2929. For further information about the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, please call 1-800-700-5752 or visit its website, <http://calfed.ca.gov>.

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